

Message Text

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TO USDEL LOS ANGELES IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017749

TOSEC 25

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: YOUR MEETING WITH ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

KIFLE WODAJO - MONDAY, JANRY 27 - 4 PM

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S. - THE SECRETARY, THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL
AFFAIRS, ARTHUR HUMMEL, AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO ETHIOPIA,
WENDELL B. COOTE, DIRECTOR, AF/E (NOTETAKER).

ETHIOPIA: - FOREIGN MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.
KIFLE WODAJO, PHONETIC: KIF-LAY, ADDRESSED: MR. MINISTER,
COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY GHEBEYEHOU MEKBIB

PHOTOGRAPHERS WILL BE PRESENT BRIEFLY AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE MEETING.

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CHECKLIST:

--BILATERAL RELATIONS - TELL KIFLE THAT WE ARE PREPARED
TO CONTINUE THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD WITH

ETHIOPIA.

-- ARMS - INFORM KIFLE THAT WE ARE CONTINUING WITH OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS PROPOSED LAST YEAR AND THAT WE ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING THE REQUEST FOR INCREASED CREDITS AND CASH SALES WHICH HE RAISED WITH MR. SISCO.

-- ERITREA - EXPRESS US GRATIFICATION AT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM.

-- DEFENSE ACTION ON ETHIOPIAN ASSISTANCE REQUESTS - ASSURE KIFLE THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE PROMPT ACTION ON AGREED-UPON MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROJECTS.

SETTING:

KIFLE'S OBJECTIVE IS TO (1) PRESENT DIRECTLY TO YOU HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSURANCES THAT IT RECIPROCATES OUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED FRIENDLY AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS; (2) INFORM YOU OF ETHIOPIA'S NEED FOR INCREASED ARMS SUPPLIES; (3) REQUEST THAT THE USG SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FY 75 FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) CREDITS FROM THE DOLS 8.3 MILLION APPROVED LAST NOVEMBER; AND (4) INDICATE THE NEED FOR FASTER ACTION BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IN GETTING ALL MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA BY JUNE 1975.

OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO REASSURE KIFLE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS WILLING TO CONTINUE WITH THE NEW REGIME THE SAME FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND CLOSE COOPERATION AS WITH ITS PREDECESSORS. THIS ATTITUDE WAS CONVEYED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON DECEMBER 23 BY MR. SISCO AND YOU DECIDED ON DECEMBER 26 THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY ACTION BY THE ETHIOPIANS INIMICAL TO THE UNITED STATES, WE WOULD CONTINUE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS CONFIDENTIAL

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PREVIOUSLY PROJECTED. WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ANY CHANGE IN THE CLOSE RELATIONS WHICH HAVE EXISTED OVER THE YEARS WOULD BE SOLELY THE RESULT OF ETHIOPIA'S INITIATIVE, NOT OURS.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

OUR RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA, PREVIOUSLY CLOSE; HAVE BECOME UNCERTAIN AND THEIR FUTURE COURSE UNPREDICTABLE SINCE THE MILITARY BEGAN THEIR TAKEOVER OF AUTHORITY IN FEBRUARY 1974. THE NEW LEADERSHIP IS LARGELY ANONYMOUS, IT SHUNS CONTACTS WITH FOREIGNERS AND WE HAVE,

AS A MATTER OF POLICY, NOT YET ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH ANY. WE ARE CONSEQUENTLY UNAWARE OF THEIR TRUE INTENTIONS IN THE FOREIGN RELATIONS FIELD AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAVE NOT FORMULATED THEM WITH ANY PRECISION. ALONG WITH ITS NEW BUT STILL LARGELY UNDEFINED "SOCIALIST" PRONOUNCEMENT, THE NEW REGIME HAS PROCLAIMED A POLICY OF "STRICT" NON-ALIGNMENT. IT MAY WELL TRY TO APPEAR LESS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED STATES THAN PRIOR GOVERNMENTS BUT HOW FAR IT WILL GO IN FACT TO LOOSEN THIS ASSOCIATION REMAINS TO BE SEEN. FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE, WHO HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A WEEK'S CONSULTATIONS IN ADDIS ABABA, REPORTS THAT HE HAS RECEIVED DIRECT ASSURANCES FROM MAJOR GENERAL TEFERI BANTE, CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC); AND THE YOUNG HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL VICE CHAIRMEN, THAT THE NEW REGIME WISHES TO CONTINUE THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. KIFLE HIMSELF CAN BE EXPECTED TO WORK FOR THIS OBJECTIVE.

THE NEW MILITARY LEADERS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR INDICATIONS OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM. THE PRINCIPAL INDICATORS IN THEIR EYES ARE OUR DECISIONS WITH REGARD TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW AMBASSADOR AND IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST FOR INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

THE APPOINTMENT AND EARLY ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR HUMMEL
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SHOULD HELP TO ASSURE THE NEW REGIME THAT WE ARE NOT INEVITABLY HOSTILE TO IT DESPITE ITS OVERTHROW OF OUR LONG-TIME FRIEND HAILE SELASSIE. SO SHOULD THE CONTINUATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. PRIOR TO THE EXECUTIONS OF NOVEMBER 23 WE HAD AGREED TO CONTINUE WITH THE INCREASED ASSISTANCE PACKAGE WE HAD PUT TOGETHER AS A RESULT OF THE HAILE SELASSIE REGIME'S REQUEST. WE BELIEVE THAT THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ETHIOPIA'S GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION JUSTIFIES A FORTHCOMING STAND ON OUR PART AS LONG AS THE NEW GOVERNMENT DOES NOT TAKE ACTION INIMICAL TO OUR INTERESTS.

YOU LAST SAW KIFLE ON OCTOBER 5, 1973, WHEN HE ACCOMPANIED THEN FOREIGN MINISTER MINASSIE ON A CALL ON YOU AT NEW YORK DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. YOU WERE UNABLE TO KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH HIM ON JANUARY 20. MR. SISCO RECEIVED HIM IN YOUR STEAD AND INTRODUCED AMBASSADOR HUMMEL TO HIM. AS THE RESULT OF HIS

CONVERSATION WITH KIFLE ON THAT OCCASION; IN WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER URGED THAT WE PROVIDE ETHIOPIA MORE CREDIT ASSISTANCE AND THAT WE DELIVER ALL EQUIPMENT

WHICH THEY WANT BY JUNE 1975, MR. SISCO THOUGH IT WOULD BE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO BE RESCHEDULED AND SO RECOMMENDED.

COURTESY POINTS:

-- EXPRESS YOUR REGRET TO KIFLE THAT YOUR BUSINESS AT THE WHITE HOUSE PREVENTED YOU FROM MEETING WITH HIM LAST MONDAY.

-- TELL THE FOREIGN MINISTER HOW PLEASED WE ARE TO BE SENDING A MAN OF SUCH CALIBER AND EXPERIENCE AS AMBASSADOR HUMMEL TO ETHIOPIA.

-- CONGRATULATE KIFLE ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT A MAN OF HIS KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES IN THIS POSITION BODES WELL FOR OUR FUTURE RELATIONS.

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-- WISH HIM SUCCESS IN HIS IMPORTANT NEW ASSIGNMENT.

-- (NOTE: KIFLE HAS LITTLE SENSE OF HUMOR).

ISSUES/TALKING POINTS:

1. BILATERAL RELATIONS

ETHIOPIAN POSITION: KIFLE WILL TELL YOU THAT THE NEW MILITARY REGIME RECIPROCATES OUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED CLOSE RELATIONS. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS ITS WISH TO CONTINUE RECEIVING ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE NEW REGIME MAY BE LESS WILLING TO BE IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE COLLABORATOR OF OURS THAN WAS THE GOVERNMENT OF HAILE SELASSIE.

U.S. POSITION: OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO HAVE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND TO SUPPLY ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS BASED ON OUR INTEREST IN MAINTAINING A FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH A GOVERNMENT IN A STRATEGIC AREA, AND STABILITY IN THAT AREA.

YOUR TALKING POINTS:

-- WE APPRECIATE THE MESSAGE THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS BROUGHT TO US AND LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THE NEW REGIME.

-- WE ARE PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE HAVE MUTUAL INTERESTS WITH ETHIOPIA AND CAN OBTAIN MUTUAL

BENEFITS FROM CLOSE COOPERATION. WE DO NOT INSIST THAT ETHIOPIA BE PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE ASSOCIATE BUT WE OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT CONTINUE OUR CLOSE COOPERATION WERE ETHIOPIA TO TAKE ANY ACTION DETRIMENTAL TO OUR INTERESTS.

2. ARMS REQUEST

ETHIOPIA POSITION: KIFLE WILL INFORM YOU OF ETHIOPIA'S CONTINUING NEED FOR INCREASED AMOUNTS OF MODERN DEFENSIVE
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ARMS WITH WHICH TO FACE THE THREAT OF ARMED ATTACK FROM SOVIET-SUPPLIED SOMALIA. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT NOW WANTS TO CONSUMMATE THE TWO-YEAR PACKAGE OF DOLS 53 MILLION IN CASH SALES AUTHORIZATIONS AND FY 74 AND 75 FMS CREDITS TALLING DOLS 19.3 MILLION WHICH WAS AGREED TO LAST YEAR, BUT WANTS THE CASH SALES COMPONENT CHANGED TO CREDIT ASSISTANCE. THIS WOULD MEAN AN INCREASE IN FY 75 FMS CREDITS FROM THE DOLS 8.3 MILLION ALREADY APPROVED TO OVER DOLS 50 MILLION. KIFLE MAY ALSO INFORM YOU THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DESIRES TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL CASH PURCHASES IN THE CONTEXT OF A MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO KIFLE AND ETHIOPIAN MILITARY SOURCES IN ADDIS ABABA, THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT PRESENTLY WISHES TO ACQUIRE FOR CREDIT AND/OR CASH EQUIPMENT VALUED AT ABOUT DOLS 130 MILLION FOR DELIVERY DURING 1975, MUCH OF IT BY JUNE OF THIS YEAR. KIFLE MAY REQUEST OUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FASTER ACTION OUT OF DEFENSE ON THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

U.S. POSITION: YOU DECIDED ON DECEMBER 26, 1974, THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE WITH ONGOING ECONOMIC AID PROJECTS AND MILITARY DELIVERIES AND WOULD CONCLUDE NEW AGREEMENTS AND SALES IN THESE FIELDS AS PROJECTED IN 1974 BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 23 EXECUTIONS. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, REVIEW EACH ACTION AND EACH IMPLEMENTING STEP ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS IN THE LIGHT OF EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES. RECENT LEGISLATION HAS IN SOME WAYS INCREASED CONSTRAINTS

ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S ABILITY TO EXTEND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WE ARE PRESENTLY EXPLORING WITH DEFENSE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR BEING RESPONSIVE TO THE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST, WITH RESPECT TO THE SPECIFIC ITEMS THEY DESIRE AND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TOTAL PACKAGE THEY NOW WANT. THEIR DESIRE FOR EARLY DELIVERY OF ITEMS WITH LONG LEAD TIMES WILL IN SOME INSTANCES BE PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET, IN SPITE OF DEFENSE'S BEST EFFORTS.

YOUR TALKING POINTS:

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-- THE U.S. HAS DECIDED TO CONTINUE MILITARY DELIVERIES AND ECONOMIC AID AS PREVIOUSLY PROJECTED, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY ETHIOPIAN ACTIONS INIMICAL TO US OR DETRIMENTAL TO OUR INTERESTS.

-- WE WILL GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE MINISTER'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL CREDITS AND CASH PURCHASES. WHILE THE RECENTLY-PASSED FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT PROVIDES FOR EXCEPTION TO THE DOLS 40 MILLION CEILING ON CREDITS AND GRANTS TO AFRICA THROUGH A PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER, FUNDING REMAINS UNDER CONTINUING RESOLUTION AND CONGRESS HAS NOT YET PASSED AN APPROPRIATION BILL. FURTHERMORE, ANY CASH SALE OF OVER DOLS 25 MILLION MUST NOW BE APPROVED BY CONGRESS.

-- THE MINISTER SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THE MANY OTHER WORLDWIDE CLAIMS ON THE LIMITED FUNDS AVAILABLE.

-- WHILE WE WILL SPEAK TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO SPEED UP DELIVERIES TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT IN SOME CASES AND IMPOSSIBLE IN OTHERS TO MAKE EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES BY JUNE, AS THE ETHIOPIANS WANT.

3. ERITREA:

ETHIOPIAN POSITION: THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS VACILLATED BETWEEN INTRANSIGENCE AND CONCILIATION IN ITS APPROACH TO THE 10-YEAR OLD ERITREAN INSURGENCY. KIFLE HAS TOLD US THAT HE WAS REQUESTED BY THE PMAC TO INFORM YOU THAT THE MILITARY REGIME IN ADDIS IS SEEKING A POLITICAL AND NOT A MILITARY SOLUTION TO ERITREA. TO THIS END IT HOPES THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES, NOTABLY SUDAN, WHICH HAVE TIES TO BOTH ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA WILL BE OF

HELP IN RESOLVING THIS ISSUE.

U.S. POSITION: WE ARE ANXIOUS TO SEE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM, AS ERITREA, WITH ITS RED SEA PORTS OF MASSAWA AND ASSAB, IS THE MORE STRATEGICALLY LOCATED PART OF ETHIOPIA, AND THE SITE OF OUR NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY (KAGNEW STATION). THE STATION HAS PHASED DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY BUT OVER 100 AMERICAN

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EMPLOYEES, MOSTLY CIVILIANS, STILL REMAIN THERE.

YOUR TALKING POINT:

-- WE ARE PLEASED TO LEARN OF ETHIOPIA'S INTENTION TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THE FOREIGN MINISTER CAN GIVE US ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ERITREA, INCLUDING HIS GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT APPROACH AND FUTURE TACTICS.

4. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERFORMANCE ON ETHIOPIAN AID REQUESTS

ETHIOPIAN POSITION: KIFLE WILL TELL YOU THAT ETHIOPIA IS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE SLOWNESS OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IN PROCESSING ETHIOPIAN REQUESTS FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THAT HE SUSPECTS THE PENTAGON OF NOT HAVING BEEN COMPLETELY FRANK WITH HIM ON THE AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN ITEMS.

U.S. POSITION: THE STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENTS WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER ON THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND DECISIONS AND ACTIONS ARE TAKEN AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE, GIVEN OUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND WORLDWIDE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS. IN THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA, OUR OCCASIONAL LACK OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE INTENTIONS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WITH REGARD TO MILITARY PROCUREMENT HAS ALSO SLOWED THINGS DOWN.

YOUR TALKING POINT: (IF ISSUE IS RAISED)

-- THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER, PROCESS, AND TAKE ACTION ON ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE REQUESTS AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE. AN EXAMPLE OF OUR DESIRE TO BE FORTHCOMING WAS THE DIVERSION FROM US UNITS IN THE FIELD OF SELECTED MATERIAL TO ALLOW EARLY SHIPMENTS LAST SPRING TO ETHIOPIA. INGERSOLL

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